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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

RAISING DOMESTIC RABBITS*

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Rabbits have been raised for food and fur in this country for many years, and during this time the meat of both wild and domestic varieties has had a place on the American table and the pelts have been a staple in the fur market. In the past few years the production of domestic rabbits has developed into an industry that promises to become important the country over.

DEMAND AND SUPPLY

On the west coast of the United States rabbits are produced in large numbers; some breeders keep only a half dozen animals, others have 100 to 200, and others from 500 to 5,000. Almost everybody in the rural districts there has at least a few. Three slaughter houses are operated in the district of Los Angeles, Calif., where from 25,000 to 35,000 rabbits a month are killed, dressed, and marketed, and the demand still keeps ahead of the supply. Rabbits are served at hotels and restaurants along with other meats, and large quantities are used on the home table. More than \$1,000,000 worth of dressed rabbit meat was marketed in the city of Los Angeles in 1925.

MARGIN AND PROFIT

The young rabbit is marketed as a fryer at 8-weeks of age, when it weighs about 4 pounds. The producer sells his 8-weeks-old rabbits direct to the slaughter house or wholesale meat market. In California the slaughter houses operate large trucks that call at the rabbitries regularly each week to buy market rabbits, which are hauled into Los Angeles and killed, usually the following day. The dressed rabbits are sold direct to local meat markets, clubs, and hotels.

*The information in this leaflet has been compiled for the information of correspondents and others until a formal publication on the subject can be prepared. A Farmers' Bulletin (No. 1519-F) on "Rabbit Skins for Fur" will be available for distribution about January 1, 1927. Farmers' Bulletin No. 1090, "Rabbit Raising," is out of print and not available for free distribution

The producer usually received 18 to 20 cents a pound for growing the rabbit, a price that nets him a margin of 45 to 50 cents a head over cost of production. The dressed carcass, with head and feet off and entrails removed, usually retails at 45 to 50 cents a pound.

MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

Successful rabbit raising requires good management in the organization of the rabbitry, as well as selection of stock, feeding, and breeding, combined with an intimate knowledge of market requirements. Progress in all lines of industry depends very largely upon organized effort. Rabbit producers, appreciating the advantages of organization, have been quick to form local and State clubs, which are usually affiliated with a national association. Such organizations are developing rapidly throughout the country and are helpful in fostering this growing industry.

HUTCHES

Hutches for a large breed of rabbit should have about 12 square feet of floor space and a height of 18 to 24 inches, inside measurement. If there is plenty of room in the rabbitry, it is best to have the hutches separate, but to save space they are frequently built in tiers or stacks two or three high. Rabbits are more easily cared for, however, and are less likely to become diseased in well-built hutches than in extemporized ones, which become foul and unwholesome unless frequently cleaned and rebedded with straw, leaves, or other absorbent. Self-cleaning hutches require no bedding and are easily kept in good order.

There are two general kinds of self-cleaning hutches, those with slat floors and those with slanting floors. Slat floors are made of 2-inch strips of board, spaced half an inch apart. Beneath each floor is a galvanized-iron pan about 1 inch deep, designed to catch droppings and made to fit closely in order to prevent upward drafts of air. The slats forming the floors are nailed to the cross pieces above them, to save space and to allow the pan to slide close to the floor.

The floor of the slanting-floor hutch is built of dressed tongue-and-groove lumber running crosswise of the hutch and has a slope of about 1 inch to the foot toward the back. A space of about half an inch between the floor and the rear wall allows refuse from the hutch to fall to the ground.

Racks for hay should be provided in all hutches. The next box may be made of an ordinary wooden packing box about 12 inches wide, 16 inches long, and 10 or 12 inches high. The cover should be removable, and a hole should be cut in the side for an entrance.

BREEDS OF RABBITS

There are more than 25 breeds of rabbits raised in the United States. The utility rabbits, so classed because of their size and ability to produce a marketable carcass during a reasonable feeding period, are American Blues, Blue Beverens, White Beverens, Flemish Giants, Checkered Giants, New Zealand Reds (American Reds), New Zealand Whites (American Whites), French Silvers (Champagne d'Argent), and Chinchillas.

The following lists of rabbit breeders for the use of persons who wish to communicate with them or to purchase stock for breeding or other purposes, may be procured on request addressed to the Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.:

Bi-880, "Breeders of Fancy Rabbits."

Bi-881, "Breeders of Utility Rabbits."

Bi-883, "Breeders of Chinchilla Rabbits."

BREEDING

The period of gestation in the rabbit is about 30 days. A breeding doe usually raises four litters of young a year, with a rest in July and August and again in December and January. The doe is bred early in February, having the first litter of the year early in March, and is mated again when her first litter is 6 weeks old and ready to be weaned. When rabbits are raised exclusively for meat, five or six litters are sometimes raised in a year from one mature doe, but such intensive breeding should not be continued more than one or two years. Younger does should then be used and the older ones discarded or bred less frequently.

The age at which rabbits may be bred varies according to the length of time required for them to attain full size. In utility rabbits this is usually at 7 or 8 months of age. In small breeds it may be at 5 months. It is not advisable to breed rabbits after they are 3 years old. Old does are generally mated with young bucks, and young does with old bucks, in order to increase the vigor of the progeny.

The number of young in a litter varies greatly. Litters of 10 or 12 occur, but these are too large for a doe to raise. Only 6 or 7 of the best of the young should be saved. It is of advantage to have several does bred at about the same time, for it is then possible to adjust the number of young by transferring some from one doe to another.

Each breeding doe must have a separate hutch for herself and young, and the buck must also be kept by himself. One buck is sufficient for 10 to 12 does. At mating time the doe should be placed in the hutch of the buck and the pair watched to see that they really mate, after which the doe should be immediately removed to her own hutch. At the end of 10 days she should be returned to the buck, and if she then refuses his advances it may be concluded that she is pregnant.

A few days before the young are expected, the hutch should be carefully cleaned and plenty of soft hay or straw placed in it. The doe will make her own nest. A day or two after the young are born she may be removed from the hutch for a few minutes for an examination of the nest to determine the number of young in the litter and to remove any that may be dead. No other disturbance of the young is advisable until they are large enough to come out of the nest and run about the hutch. At this time the nest box should be cleaned and fresh straw provided.

The young may be weaned when about 6 weeks old, after which they may be kept in one hutch until 3 or 4 months old, when the sexes should be separated. In open runs a considerable number of young female rabbits may be kept in the same inclosure until they are ready for market or for breeding. The same is true of males, unless some are unusually quarrelsome. Unruly young bucks must be separated from the others.

FEEDING

Clean oats (whole or crushed), bright, well-cured hay, and a small portion of some kind of greens daily is the steady diet used in most rabbitries. Crushed barley may be substituted for oats; clover or alfalfa may be used with green oats or timothy hay; and the greens may consist of carrots, rutabagas, lettuce, or lawn clippings. Lawn clippings or other green grass should be clean and not fed when moldy or fermented. Some breeders feed no green stuff, while others use all that is available. It is usually wise to avoid both extremes but green feed must be used with more caution than is necessary with dry feed, and only the best of any kind should be used. Spoiled, moldy, or dirty feeds are to be avoided as injurious to rabbits.

Most breeders feed rabbits twice daily. The quantity of grain required depends on the age and condition of the rabbits, and also on the kind and quantity of the other feed they receive. Some rabbits require more grain than others. Only by noticing the condition of each animal day by day can its feed be properly regulated. Full-grown animals require less grain between than during breeding periods.

Rabbits should never be allowed to become heavy with fat unless wanted for the table. Eighteen or twenty young rabbits from 3 to 5 months old fed a pint of crushed oats or barley a day, in addition to plenty of dry alfalfa and greens, will grow well. Older rabbits may be fattened for meat at any time, and feeding should continue about 3 weeks, with the animals confined in small quarters to prevent their getting too much exercise. The proportion of greens in the feed should be decreased, and the proportion of grain increased. By gradually replacing half the usual grain ration with corn meal the rate of fattening can be increased.

SKINNING AND DRESSING

After the rabbit is killed the carcass is hung by the right hind leg on a nail or hook inserted near the hock joint between the tendons and the bone of the leg. When it is thus suspended, the head is cut off to allow free bleeding in order that the meat may have a good color. The tail, the two forefeet, and the left hind foot are next cut off at the first joint. In this operation care should be taken to work the knife through the joints so as not to cut the tendons or let the flesh slip down the leg, and not to splinter the bone, which would make a rough surface and detract from the appearance of the carcass.

The skin is then cut around the hock joint of the right hind leg and pulled downward. This loosened skin is next cut open on the inside of the leg to the foot of the tail, then up the inside of the other leg to the other hock joint. The skin of the hind leg is then taken in one hand, and with a sharp knife in the other, the fat is carefully cut away before starting to pull the pelt down over the carcass. Fat usually accumulates at the point where the hind legs join the body, and this should always be cut loose and left on the carcass, else it will stick to the skin and detract from its appearance and selling value.*

Next remove the feet by breaking the bone about halfway between the first and second joints and cutting through the muscle and connective tissue. Make a lengthwise slit through the thin muscular wall over the belly, up through the cartilage of the ribs to the neck. Remove the entrails, lungs, and windpipe, reserving the heart and liver for cooking, and carefully remove the gall bladder. The carcass should be placed in ice water and allowed to remain for 5 to 6 hours. This makes the meat white, firm, and attractive.

COOKING

Few housewives are familiar with the food value and delicious flavor of domestic rabbit meat. It can be better compared with chicken than with wild rabbit, for it is as tasty as chicken and richer in protein than beef, veal, mutton, or pork. Domestic rabbits are cleanly in habits and the nature of their food makes the meat sweet, tender, and excellently flavored.

In its study of the meat of the rabbit the Bureau of Home Economics has developed the following directions and recipes:

The rabbit should be washed carefully in cold water and patted dry with a clean towel. It may then be cut into 8 or 10 pieces (if not to be cooked whole). First disjoint the legs, cutting the hind legs into two pieces each if desired, and cut the saddle into four pieces.

Fried rabbit.-- Dress one rabbit, cut in pieces, dredge with flour, salt, and pepper. Heat 4 tablespoonfuls of fat in a frying pan, drop the rabbit in this, and fry slowly for 30 to 45 minutes, depending upon tenderness and age. Serve with cream gravy, using the fat in which the rabbit was fried.

*See footnote on first page regarding the utilization of skins.

Fricassee of rabbit. -- Skin, draw, and wash rabbit and cut it into pieces. Dredge with flour, salt, and pepper. Brown in 4 tablespoonfuls of fat. Change from frying pan to stewpan, cover with boiling water, and cook slowly until tender. Remove meat from broth. Thicken broth with 1 tablespoonful of flour to 1 cup of broth. Boil vigorously for a minute or two, then add dumplings, cover closely, and allow to steam 15 to 20 minutes. Pour dumplings and gravy over meat on hot serving platter.

Baked rabbit. -- Skin, clean, and wash one rabbit and split it in two, cutting along the backbone. Rub with salt and a little pepper, place in a roasting pan, and dredge with flour. Lay strips of bacon across the rabbit. Pour over and around it 3 cups of white sauce or 3 cups of cream. Bake $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, basting frequently. Serve hot with cream gravy. The liver may be boiled until tender, chopped, and added to the gravy before serving.

Rabbit stew with vegetables. -- Skin, draw, and wash one rabbit carefully, cut it into pieces, cover with cold water, and allow to boil slowly until almost tender. Add 4 medium-sized potatoes, cut in quarters, 4 large carrots cut in cubes, 1 medium-sized or 2 small onions, or other vegetables if desired, and cook until tender. Salt, season with a few grains of pepper, and add 3 tablespoonfuls of flour moistened in a little cold water. Stir until the broth surrounding the stew is slightly thickened, and serve at once.

Rabbit pie. -- Skin and draw rabbit, cut it into pieces, put it into stewpan, and cover with boiling water. Cook until very tender. Remove meat from broth and concentrate broth to about one-half. Pick the meat from the bones in as large pieces as possible. Thicken stock with 1 tablespoonful of flour for each cup of broth and pour over meat. Add 2 teaspoonfuls of salt and $1/8$ teaspoonful of pepper. Line the sides of a baking dish with crust, add meat mixture, cover with crust, and bake in hot oven 30 minutes.

Smothered rabbit. -- Put rabbit, whole, in roasting pan, stuff (recipe given below), truss, lard with 3 strips of bacon, dredge with 3 tablespoonfuls of flour, 2 tablespoonfuls of salt, $1/4$ teaspoonful of pepper. Put 2 cups of water in pan. Allow to cook until tender and well browned, or about 1 hour. Remove the rabbit and thicken the gravy with 1 tablespoonful of flour to each cup. Into this gravy drop baking-powder biscuits and bake uncovered until well browned.

Rabbit stuffing. -- Made with 2 cups of bread crumbs, 1 egg slightly beaten, 1 teaspoonful of salt, $1/4$ teaspoonful of pepper, 1 sprig of parsley cut fine, and 1 small onion grated.

A "rabbit meat" poster 18 by 27 inches in size and printed in colors, has been issued by the Department in order to acquaint the public with the quality of domestic rabbit meat and encourage its consumption. A request addressed to the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., will bring any one a copy who will post it in his place of business.

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Rabbits have been bred for food and fur in this country for many years, and during this time the meat of both wild and domestic varieties has had a place on the American table and the pelts have been a staple in the fur market. In the past few years the production of domestic rabbits has developed into an industry that promises to become important the country over.

DEMAND AND SUPPLY

On the west coast of the United States, especially in southern California, rabbits are produced in large numbers; some breeders keep only 50 or 100 animals, and others 1,000 to 5,000 or more. Almost everybody in the rural districts there has at least a few. Several slaughter houses are operated in the Los Angeles district, where from 25,000 to 50,000 rabbits a month are killed, dressed, and marketed, and the demand still keeps ahead of the supply. Rabbits are served at hotels and restaurants along with other meats, and large quantities are used on the home table. More than \$1,000,000 worth of dressed rabbit meat was marketed in the city of Los Angeles in 1926.

MARGIN AND PROFIT

In California rabbits are usually marketed as fryers at 8 weeks of age, when they weigh about 4 pounds each. The producer sells his 8-weeks-old rabbits direct to the slaughter house or wholesale meat market. The slaughter houses operate large trucks that call at the rabbit-ries regularly each week to buy market rabbits and haul them into Los Angeles, where they are killed, usually the following day. The dressed rabbits are sold to local meat markets, clubs, hotels, and restaurants.

*Farmers' Bulletin No. 1090, "Rabbit Raising," is out of print, and this leaflet has been compiled for use until a new bulletin can be published. Farmers' Bulletin No. 1519, "Rabbit Skins for Fur," is now available and will be sent free upon request.

One large concern not only kills rabbits and furnishes the wholesale markets with fresh meat daily but also manufactures fresh and smoked rabbit sausage, jellied and pressed meats, meat loaf, and other rabbit-meat products.

The producer usually receives 18 to 20 cents a pound for growing the rabbit, a price that nets him a margin of 45 to 50 cents a head over the cost of production. The dressed carcass, with head and feet off and entrails removed, usually retails at 45 to 50 cents a pound.

MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

Successful rabbit raising requires good stock, good management, and good organization. Healthy, vigorous animals are necessary as a foundation. Good management, which includes breeding, feeding, housing, and marketing, is essential if a substantial profit is to be made. Appreciating the fact that progress in industry depends very largely upon organized effort, rabbit breeders have formed many local and State clubs throughout the country, the majority of which are affiliated with a national association representing the entire rabbit industry. These organizations are developing rapidly and are helpful in fostering this growing industry.

BREEDS AND VARIETIES

There are 18 breeds of domestic rabbits recognized by the National Rabbit Federation as being distinctive in type. In some instances there are several varieties of a breed, alike in size and type but with a wide range in color variation. These breeds and varieties are divided into two separate classes, or groups, known as utility and fancy.

The utility breeds, so classed because of their size and ability to produce a marketable carcass and a good pelt during a reasonable feeding period, are the American, Beveren, Chinchilla, Checkered Giant, Flemish Giant, New Zealand, and French Silver (Champagne d'Argent), and their varieties.

The fancy breeds, which are kept principally for show purposes, include the Angora, Belgian, Dutch, English, Havana, Himalayan, Lilac, Lop, Polish, Silver Gray, and Tan and their varieties.

The American White, American Blue, New Zealand White, New Zealand Red, and the White Flemish are the varieties most extensively bred in the United States for meat and fur. Any breed or variety in the utility class, however, may be bred for commercial purposes and made to pay a profit if properly fed, housed, and cared for, although the five mentioned are considered the greatest money makers because of their good meat qualities.

The following lists of rabbit breeders, prepared for the use of persons who wish to purchase stock for breeding or other purposes, may be procured on request addressed to the Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.:

- Bi-880, "Breeders of Fancy Rabbits."
- Bi-881, "Breeders of Utility Rabbits."
- Bi-883, "Breeders of Chinchilla Rabbits."

BREEDING

The age at which rabbits may be bred varies according to the length of time required for them to attain full size. In the utility breeds this is usually at 7 or 8 months. In small breeds it may be at 5 or 6 months. It is not advisable to breed rabbits after they are 3 or 4 years old. Old does are generally mated with young bucks, and young does with old bucks, as this increases the vigor of the progeny.

The period of gestation is 31 days. It is customary to breed each doe four times a year, allowing 31 days for gestation and 60 days for her to raise and wean the young, after which she is bred again. For example, if a doe is bred on January 1 she will probably kindle January 31; the young are usually left with her for eight weeks, when they are ready for market, and she is bred again about April 1. The second litter is ready for market on July 1, when the doe is bred the third time. This brings the fourth breeding about October 1.

A breeding doe can raise six or eight litters a year but if bred this frequently would soon break down and be worthless for further breeding purposes. When breeding is exclusively for meat, five or six litters are sometimes raised in a year, but such intensive breeding is usually limited to about a year or a little more, when lack of strength and vitality is manifest and the young fail to grow properly. The doe is then sent to market and a younger and more vigorous one substituted. When rabbits are bred for show purposes or when great vigor and vitality are desired it is best not to breed the doe more than two or three times a year.

Allowing an interval of three months between each breeding period gives the doe time to regain flesh and vitality after suckling the young and before being bred again, thereby insuring stronger and better offspring.

The number of young in a litter varies greatly. Litters of 10 or 12 occur, and sometimes more, but these are too large for one doe to raise. Only 6 of the best young should be saved, unless the doe is an exceptionally good mother. As with cows, does vary in the quantity of milk they give, and therefore some are capable of raising

larger litters than others. It is advantageous to have several does bred at about the same time, for it is then possible to adjust the number of young by transferring some from one doe to another.

Each breeding doe must have a separate hutch for herself and her young, and the buck must also be kept by himself. One buck is sufficient for 10 breeding does. At mating time the doe should be placed in the hutch of the buck (never put the buck in the doe's hutch) and the animals watched to see that they mate. If actual copulation takes place the buck will usually fall over backward or on his side afterward, and then the doe should be immediately removed to her own hutch. If the doe runs from the buck and does not accept service within four or five minutes she should be taken away and returned again two or three hours later. A buck and doe should not be left together for protracted periods, as they are apt to fight and injure each other. Ten days after the doe is bred she should be returned to the buck, as a test, and if she then refuses his advances it may be concluded that she is pregnant.

An accurate record should be kept of the date each doe is bred, and a few days before the young are expected the hutch should be carefully cleaned and the nest box, containing plenty of hay or straw, placed inside. The doe will make her own nest. A day or two after the young are born she may be removed from the hutch a few minutes for an examination of the nest to determine the number of young in the litter and to remove any that may be dead. No other disturbance of the young is advisable until they are large enough to come out of the nest and run about the hutch. At this time the nest should be cleaned and fresh straw provided.

The young may be weaned when about 6 weeks old, but it is best to leave them with the doe until they are 8 weeks old, after which the sexes should be separated and, if not marketed, the males and females should be placed in separate hutches. In open runs a considerable number of young does may be kept in the same inclosure until they are ready for market or for breeding. The same is true of young bucks, unless some are unusually quarrelsome. Unruly young bucks must be separated from the others.

FEEDING

Clean bright oats (whole or crushed), rolled barley, well-cured alfalfa hay, and a small quantity of some kind of green feed, preferably carrots, is the daily diet used in most rabbitries. Wheat bran mixed with oats or barley (equal parts by volume) may be fed about once a week with good results. Clover hay may be substituted for alfalfa where the latter is not available, but alfalfa is preferable and is eaten more readily by the rabbits. The hay should be cut

into about one inch. lengths before feeding, as it is consumed more easily and there is less wastage. Other greens may consist of rutabagas, potatoes, cabbages, mangels, or lawn clippings. Lawn clippings and other green feeds should always be fresh and clean and not fed when moldy or fermented. Some breeders feed no green stuff, while others use all that is available. It is usually wise to avoid both extremes, but green feed must be used with more caution than is necessary with dry feed, and only the best of any kind should be used. Spoiled, moldy, or dirty feeds are to be avoided as they cause sickness and disease.

Rabbits should be fed twice daily. The quantity of grain required depends on the age and condition of the animals, and also on the kind and quantity of hay and green feeds they receive. Some rabbits require more grain than others. Only by noticing the condition of each animal day by day can its feed be properly regulated. Does require more grain while suckling young than between breeding periods.

Mature rabbits should never be allowed to become too fat unless wanted for the table, as over-fat animals frequently will not breed and sometimes will die from excessive heat. They should always be watched carefully for health and condition and fed accordingly. Young rabbits, while growing, may be fed all they will clean up in 30 minutes, at each of the two meals. Excess feed should not be allowed to remain in the feed dishes and become sour or dirty, for it will cause indigestion and other ills. Mineral salt in some form, preferably in spools, that can be fastened to the side of the hutch, should be provided. These spools can be purchased at most any rabbit or poultry-supply house. Fresh clean water should be kept before the rabbits at all times as water is almost as essential as feed. Keep the feed and water dishes scrupulously clean.

HOUSES AND HUTCHES

Rabbit houses of various sizes and designs are used in different sections of the country. The type required depends very largely upon the climate. Where warm weather permits, as in California, an open-type house is used almost exclusively. Some are closed on the back, others on the back and ends, and others have only a roof over the hutches, the sides open all around. In the North and East, or wherever the weather is severe, greater protection is needed.

The essential features of a rabbit house, no matter where located, are light and fresh air. These are necessary to the health of the animals. Houses should always be so constructed, however, as to prevent drafts, as drafts cause colds and other diseases. A house of moderate size that will accommodate 500 animals or less is also

preferable to a very large one, as rabbits kept in smaller units are less liable to contract disease.

Rabbit hutches should have about 12 square feet of floor space. The standard dimensions are 4 feet long, 30 inches deep, and 24 inches high, inside measurement. For Flemish Giants hutches are frequently built 5 or 6 feet long. When there is plenty of room, it is best to have the hutches single tier, but to save space they are frequently built two tiers high. Hutches built more than two tiers high are inconvenient, hard to clean, and the animals are more difficult to observe. Rabbits are more easily cared for and less likely to become diseased in well-built hutches of the proper size than in extemporized ones, which become foul and unwholesome unless frequently cleaned and rebedded with straw, leaves, or other absorbent. Self-cleaning hutches require no bedding and are easily kept in good order.

There are three general kinds of self-cleaning hutches: (1) Those with slat floors and wire sides; (2) those with wire floor and sides; and (3) those with slanting board floors and usually with tight board sides and ends and an open space in the floor in the rear. Slat floors are made of 2-inch strips of board, spaced half an inch apart. Wire floors are of half-inch mesh galvanized wire cloth. Beneath each floor is a removable galvanized-iron pan about 1 inch deep designed to catch droppings and prevent the ground underneath from becoming contaminated. These types of hutches are used principally in California and in the South, where the climate is warm. They are not practicable in the North and East, where the weather is cold.

The floor of the closed-type slanting-floor hutch is built of undressed, tongue-and-groove lumber. The boards are placed crosswise and slope about 1 inch to the foot toward the back. A space in the floor, 6 inches wide running lengthwise across the back of the hutch is left open and covered with half-inch wire mesh, which allows refuse from the hutch to fall through to the ground. Blue prints of a rabbit house, a closed-type slanting-floor hutch, and a portable nest box will be sent on request addressed to the Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

COOKING

Few housewives are familiar with the food value and delicious flavor of domestic rabbit meat. Domestic rabbits are cleanly in habits, and the nature of their food makes the meat sweet, tender, and excellently flavored. It can be better compared with chicken than with wild rabbit.

Just as with poultry or various cuts of meat, young tender rabbits may be fried or roasted, while the older ones with tougher muscles need longer, moist cooking. Recipes for both types of cooking are given below by the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture:

The rabbit should be washed carefully in cold water and patted dry with a clean towel. It may then be cut into 8 to 10 pieces (if not to be cooked whole). First disjoint the legs, cutting the hind legs into two pieces each if desired, and cut the saddle into four pieces.

Fried rabbit.-- Cut a young tender rabbit in pieces, dredge with flour, salt, and pepper. Heat 4 tablespoons of fat in a frying pan, drop the rabbit into this, and fry slowly 30 to 45 minutes, depending upon tenderness and age. Serve with cream gravy, using the fat in which the rabbit was fried.

Fricassee of rabbit.--Dredge the pieces of rabbit with flour, salt, and pepper. Brown in 4 tablespoons of fat. Change from frying pan to stewpan, cover with boiling water, and cook slowly until tender. Remove meat from broth. Thicken broth with 1 tablespoon of flour to 1 cup of broth. Boil vigorously for a minute or two, then add dumplings, cover closely, and allow to steam 15 to 20 minutes. Pour dumplings and gravy over meat on hot serving platter.

Baked rabbit.--Split a young tender rabbit in two, cutting along the backbone. Rub with salt and a little pepper, place in a roasting pan, and dredge with flour. Lay strips of bacon across the rabbit. Pour over and around it 3 cups of white sauce or 3 cups of cream. Bake 1-1/2 hours, basting frequently. Serve hot with cream gravy. The liver may be boiled until tender, chopped, and added to the gravy before serving.

Rabbit stew with vegetables.--Cut the rabbit into pieces, cover with hot water, and simmer until the meat is almost tender. Add 4 medium-sized potatoes cut in quarters, 4 large carrots cut in cubes, 1 medium-sized or 2 small onions, or other vegetables if desired, and cook until tender. Salt, season with a few grains of pepper, and add 3 tablespoons of flour moistened in a little cold water. Stir until the broth surrounding the stew is slightly thickened, and serve at once. This is a good method of cooking an old rabbit.

Rabbit pie.--Cut a rabbit into pieces, put it into stewpan, and cover with boiling water. Simmer until very tender. Remove meat from broth and concentrate broth to about one-half. Pick the meat from the bones in as large pieces as possible. Thicken stock with 1 tablespoon of flour for each cup of broth and pour over meat. Add 2 teaspoons of salt and 1/8 teaspoon of pepper. Line the sides of a baking dish with crust, add meat mixture, cover with crust, and bake in hot oven 30 minutes. This also is a method of cooking a rabbit too tough for frying or baking.

Smothered rabbit.--Put a young tender rabbit, whole, in roasting pan, stuff with the mixture given below, truss, lard with 3 strips of bacon, dredge with 3 tablespoons of flour, 2 1/2 teaspoons of salt, 1/4 teaspoon of pepper. Put 2 cups of water in pan. Allow to cook until tender and well browned, or about 1 hour. Remove the rabbit and thicken the gravy with 1 tablespoon of flour to each cup. Into this gravy drop baking-powder biscuits and bake uncovered until well browned.

Rabbit stuffing.--2 cups of bread crumbs, 1 egg slightly beaten, 1 teaspoon of salt, 1/4 teaspoon of pepper, 1 sprig of parsley cut fine, and 1 small onion grated. Mix these thoroughly and stuff the rabbit as directed above.

A "rabbit meat" poster, 18 by 27 inches in size and printed in colors, has been issued by the Department in order to acquaint the public with the quality of domestic rabbit meat and encourage its consumption. A copy will be sent free to anyone interested, upon request addressed to the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

The Department receives many inquiries as to where rabbit meat and rabbit pelts can be marketed. Correspondents desiring this information are referred to the National Rabbit Federation, which has headquarters at 618-20 Temple Building, Rochester, N. Y., and is in position to assist breeders in disposing of these products and to furnish addresses of the nearest dealers.